

Work related issues and job satisfaction among of government higher education faculties

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ABSTRACT

Faculty members in higher education are pivotal in shaping the academic and professional futures of students. In India, they are categorized into two groups: tenure-track positions, which include assistant professors (AP), associate professors (ASP), and professors (P), and non-tenure “guest faculty (GF).” Despite working full-time, GF members do not receive the same benefits, such as allowances, pensions, and leave, that are provided to their tenured counterparts. This study explored job satisfaction and work-related challenges among 518 faculty members in Madhya Pradesh across these hierarchical levels. Job satisfaction was measured using a validated psychometric tool, while work-related concerns were assessed through structured interviews. The results revealed a distinct hierarchy in job satisfaction: P reported the highest satisfaction, followed by ASP, AP, and GF, who reported the lowest levels of satisfaction. GF experienced significant dissatisfaction due to issues such as discrimination, heavy workloads, low pay, and job insecurity. In contrast, tenured faculty members reported higher satisfaction, largely due to job security and manageable workloads. However, all faculty levels expressed concerns about increasing administrative burdens that detract from their teaching responsibilities. These findings highlight the disparities between tenured and non-tenured faculty, emphasizing the need for policy reforms to address job satisfaction and equity in higher education.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The job satisfaction is a critical element of organizational behavior that deeply influences employee efficiency, productivity, and overall well-being. It encompasses the emotional and cognitive responses that employees have towards their jobs, ranging from positive to negative. The concept of job satisfaction has been extensively studied across various disciplines, including industrial-organizational psychology, human resource management, and organizational behavior [1]. Job satisfaction is defined as a worker's positive or negative emotional reaction to their role at work or in work-related matters [2], highlighting the emotional aspect of job satisfaction and its impact on overall contentment [2]. It represents a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences, thereby introducing the idea that job satisfaction involves both emotional responses and cognitive evaluations of job experiences [3].

Early work emphasized the multifaceted nature of job satisfaction, considering psychological, physiological, and environmental factors that contribute to an individual's overall job satisfaction [4]. This

aspect of job satisfaction is crucial because it directly correlates with key organizational outcomes, including productivity, employee turnover, absenteeism, and organizational citizenship behavior [1]. Employees who are satisfied with their jobs are more likely to be productive, remain with the organization longer, and contribute positively to the work environment [5]. Conversely, job dissatisfaction can lead to negative outcomes such as reduced productivity, higher turnover rates, and increased absenteeism [6].

Various theories and models have been proposed to explain the factors that influence job satisfaction. One of the most prominent is Herzberg's model, which posits that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are influenced by two sets of factors: motivators, such as achievement and recognition, which lead to satisfaction, and hygiene factors, such as pay and working conditions, which can cause dissatisfaction if not adequately addressed [7]. This model suggests that enhancing motivators will increase job satisfaction, while addressing hygiene factors will prevent dissatisfaction. Other factors influencing job satisfaction include job characteristics, the work environment, leadership style, and personal characteristics of the employees. For instance, job characteristics theory suggests that jobs offering meaning, autonomy, and feedback are likely to result in higher job satisfaction [8].

In the context of higher education, job satisfaction among faculty members is particularly important as it affects not only the well-being of the faculty but also the quality of education provided to students [9], [10]. In India, faculty members are divided into two categories: tenure-track positions, including assistant professors (AP), associate professors (ASP), and professors (P), and non-tenure "guest faculty" (GF). GF are full-time non-tenure positions that were initially created by the government and universities to temporarily fill gaps due to the lack of tenure positions. However, due to the slow pace of new recruitment for tenure positions, GF members often find themselves in these roles for extended periods, sometimes as long as 20 years [11], [12]. Because large numbers of faculties in Madhya Pradesh manage recruitment, transfers, and dismissal through a portal for both school and higher education. Despite their full-time work, GF members do not receive the same benefits, such as allowances, pensions, and leave, that are provided to their tenured counterparts. Their salaries are fixed, with no opportunities for promotion or salary increments [13].

Higher education institutions in Madhya Pradesh, like those in many other regions, face unique challenges that impact job satisfaction among faculty members, including bureaucratic constraints, limited resources, and high administrative burdens [14]. India faces a significant shortage of tenure-track faculty members. Recent reports suggest that only 30% of positions in state universities are filled with tenured faculty, while institutions of national importance have filled about 70% of their positions with tenured faculty [15]. GF members fill these gaps, though they were initially intended to serve only for short periods, they serve as long as tenure faculty. Each of these positions carries its own set of responsibilities, challenges, and rewards, which can significantly influence job satisfaction levels.

GF members, in particular, face substantial challenges, including job insecurity, lower salaries, and heavy workloads. Discrimination and lack of recognition further exacerbate their job dissatisfaction [16]. The temporary nature of their contracts leaves them in constant fear of job loss, which undermines their job satisfaction and long-term career planning [17]. In contrast, permanent faculty members, such as AP, ASP, and P, enjoy greater job security and often have better salaries and benefits. They also have clearer career progression paths, which can enhance job satisfaction by providing professional growth opportunities [18]. However, even tenured faculty members face challenges, such as limited teaching time, low or no funding opportunities, poor library infrastructure, and inadequate journal subscriptions [19]. These limitations hinder their ability to engage effectively in research and teaching, leading to reduced job satisfaction. Across all hierarchical levels, faculty members express concerns about the increasing administrative burdens that detract from their core academic duties, contributing to overall dissatisfaction. The demands of administrative work, coupled with the pressures of teaching and research, create a challenging work environment that impacts job satisfaction [20].

Studies underscore the critical factors influencing job satisfaction among faculty members in higher education, particularly in the context of GF. A study in Punjab revealed that job satisfaction among college lecturers varies significantly depending on factors such as teaching load, use of technology, and involvement in co-curricular activities [21]. Another study conducted in same state on the relationship between teaching attitude, job satisfaction, and occupational stress among GF and contractual lecturers found no significant correlation between teaching attitude and job satisfaction, while job satisfaction was negatively correlated with occupational stress [22]. Lecturers with lighter workloads, those who integrate technology into their teaching, and those engaged in research and co-curricular activities reported higher job satisfaction. Furthermore, gender and type of institution (e.g., co-educational versus girls' colleges) were found to influence satisfaction levels, with male lecturers and those in girls' colleges reporting higher satisfaction. In contrast, another study focusing on guest lecturers in nepal, India highlighted the impact of job insecurity on organizational commitment. It was found that job satisfaction and job security are significant predictors of organizational commitment among guest lecturers, with job satisfaction being the more potent contributor [23]. These findings collectively emphasize the complex interplay between job satisfaction, job security, and

occupational stress, highlighting the need for tailored interventions to improve faculty satisfaction and commitment across different institutional contexts.

This study aims to examine job satisfaction among faculty members in higher education institutions in Madhya Pradesh, focusing on different hierarchical levels based on employment status and job security. While previous research has explored job satisfaction in various educational contexts, there remains a significant gap in understanding how these factors specifically impact faculty in Madhya Pradesh, particularly concerning the disparities between tenured and non-tenured positions, such as GF. By identifying the factors that influence job satisfaction and understanding the unique challenges faced by faculty members at different levels, this study seeks to fill this gap and provide insights that can improve job satisfaction and enhance overall organizational effectiveness. Addressing this research gap has significant implications for organizational productivity, workforce quality, and performance, especially in regions where higher education faces distinct challenges.

2. METHOD

The study involved 518 faculty members from government higher education institutions in Madhya Pradesh, including 220 GF, 150 AP, 100 ASP, and 48 P. Participants were selected using a probability sampling method and a proportionate stratified random sampling technique. The research was exploratory, aiming to examine job satisfaction and work-related issues across different hierarchical levels based on employment status and job security. Data collection was conducted through psychological questionnaires and personal interviews.

Two primary tools were utilized: i) The personal information schedule (PIS) and the job satisfaction scale. The PIS collected demographic data, including variables such as name, age, gender, department, and designation; and ii) Job satisfaction was assessed using the job satisfaction scale developed by Dubey *et al.* [24] in 1989. This five-point Likert scale consists of 25 items, with participants rating their level of agreement from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree.' The scale has demonstrated satisfactory psychometric properties, including a test-retest reliability of 0.64, a split-half reliability coefficient of 0.72, and an intrinsic validity score of 0.80.

Apart from the tools used, to complement the quantitative data, personal interviews were conducted, allowing participants to elaborate on various aspects of their job satisfaction, including general satisfaction, workload, work environment, career development, compensation and benefits, and job security. Participants were selected through purposive sampling across Madhya Pradesh, with questionnaires administered and personal interviews conducted. The purpose of the study was explained to participants, with assurances of confidentiality and written informed consent was taken. Data analysis involved both quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative data were analyzed using analysis of variance (ANOVA) for comparing means across different hierarchical levels, with raw scores entered into an Excel sheet and processed using SPSS-16. Qualitative data from the interviews were transcribed, coded, and subjected to thematic analysis to identify and categorize common themes. The integration of qualitative findings with quantitative results provided a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing job satisfaction among faculty members, ensuring a robust analysis through a mixed-methods approach.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

While existing research has explored various aspects of job satisfaction among faculty members, there remains a significant gap in understanding the specific challenges faced by non-tenured faculty, particularly in diverse academic disciplines and hierarchical levels within the Indian higher education context. This study addresses this gap by integrating qualitative insights with quantitative data to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing job satisfaction. Our findings, based on both qualitative and quantitative data, revealed several critical factors influencing job satisfaction among faculty members. We studied 518 faculty members from government higher education institutions using a standardized psychometric tool and a personal interview. We assessed job satisfaction with a highly validated and reliable tool [24]. We found that P exhibited the highest level of job satisfaction, with a mean score of 84.33 and a standard deviation of 6.35, see Figure 1. ASP followed with a mean job satisfaction score of 78.88 and a standard deviation of 6.1. AP had a mean score of 72.34 with a standard deviation of 5.6, while GF reported the lowest job satisfaction, with a mean score of 65.52 and a standard deviation of 4.17.

The ANOVA confirmed that these differences in job satisfaction across the hierarchical levels were statistically significant ($F=75.736$; $p<0.001$). The finding summarized in Table 1 suggests that the hierarchical position within the institution plays a crucial role in determining job satisfaction, with tenured positions such as P and ASP reporting significantly higher satisfaction levels compared to non-tenured positions like GF. Our finding confirms the findings of previous studies in India, suggesting poor job satisfaction in Kerala and Punjab [22], [25].

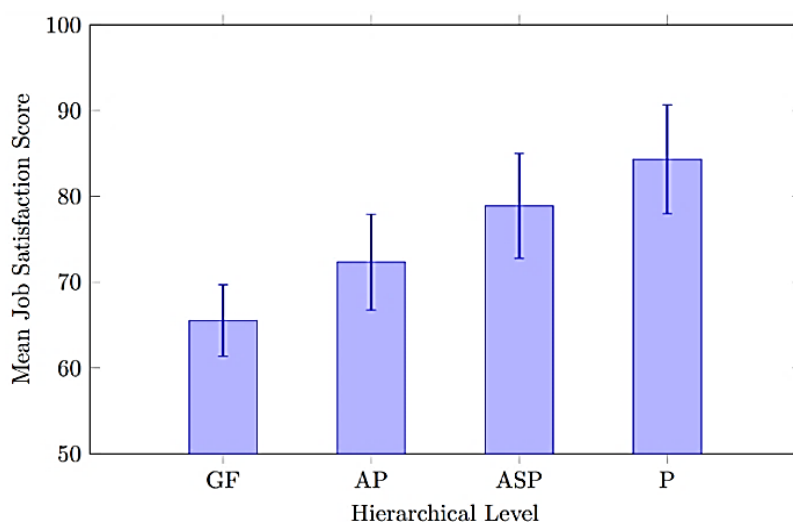


Figure 1. Job satisfaction across hierarchical levels

Table 1. Comparison of job satisfaction across different hierarchical levels among faculty members

Hierarchical level	N	Mean	Std. deviation	F value	Sig.
GF	220	65.52	4.17	75.736*	0.000
AP	150	72.34	5.6		
ASP	100	78.88	6.1		
P	48	84.33	6.35		
Total	518	73.66	8.06		

Note: *=significant at 0.001

To gain further insight into these differences, a post hoc analysis using the Tukey honest significant difference (HSD) test was conducted. The results, summarized in Table 2, confirmed that GF had significantly lower job satisfaction compared to all other groups. The mean difference in job satisfaction between GF and AP was -6.82 ($p < 0.001$), between GF and ASP was -13.35 ($p < 0.001$), and the largest difference was between GF and P, at -18.81 ($p < 0.001$). Moreover, AP reported significantly lower job satisfaction than both ASP and P, with mean differences of -6.54 ($p < 0.001$) and -12.00 ($p < 0.001$), respectively. ASP also showed lower satisfaction compared to P, with a mean difference of -5.46 ($p = 0.000$). These findings indicate that lower-ranking faculty positions, such as GF and AP, experience significantly less job satisfaction compared to higher-ranking positions like ASP and P. This pattern aligns with previous studies, which have also reported that faculty in higher positions tend to have greater job satisfaction compared to those in lower-ranking roles [22], [25].

Table 2. Post hoc analysis of job satisfaction among different hierarchical levels

Hierarchical level	Mean difference	Std. error	Turkey HSD value	Sig.
GF				
AP	-6.82	0.85	-8.07*	0.000
ASP	-13.35	1.05	-15.16*	0.000
P	-18.81	1.2	-21.31*	0.000
AP				
ASP	-6.54	1.07	-8.46*	0.000
P	-12	1.25	-14.29*	0.000
ASP				
P	-5.46	1.3	-7.73*	0.000

Note: *=significant at 0.001

The qualitative data from personal interviews, transcribed and analyzed through thematic analysis, revealed several critical factors influencing job satisfaction among faculty members. These findings, summarized in Table 3, integrated with quantitative results, offer a nuanced understanding of the challenges faced by faculty across different disciplines and hierarchical levels. Using the Hagedorn [26] approach, we found many factors affecting faculty's job satisfaction summarized in Table 3. Interviews indicated that

faculty members in science-based disciplines reported higher job satisfaction compared to their counterparts in management, commerce, social sciences, and arts/literature. Science faculty often cited better research opportunities, clearer career paths, and more robust institutional support as key contributors to their higher satisfaction levels. This trend aligns with previous research [25], where academic disciplines with more tangible outcomes and clearer career trajectories tend to yield higher job satisfaction. Organizational commitment emerged as a significant concern among GF, who expressed the lowest levels of commitment due to their non-tenured, temporary positions. The lack of job security and career advancement opportunities severely impacted their sense of belonging and dedication to the institution. This finding echoes Gupta [27], who also highlighted the strong correlation between job satisfaction and organizational commitment, particularly in contexts where job security is lacking.

Table 3. Summary of findings of qualitative analysis of faculty job satisfaction

Motivators	Mediators		Triggers
	Demographic	Environmental conditions	
Recognition	Academic discipline	Student quality	Life/career stage
Advancement		Administration	No change in range or tenure
Salary			Transfer
			Perceived justice

The analysis interviews revealed that life and career stages play a crucial role in shaping job satisfaction, particularly for GF. Drawing on Baldwin and Blackburn [28] career stage theory, faculty members are typically expected to progress through early, mid, and late career stages. However, GF, despite years of service, often find themselves stuck in the early career stage due to the absence of promotions, salary increments, and career advancement opportunities. This stagnation contributes to their lower job satisfaction, as they perceive little to no professional growth despite their experience.

A recurrent theme in the interviews was the significant salary discrepancies between GF and tenured P. GF reported dissatisfaction due to their fixed salaries, lack of periodic increments, and absence of benefits such as housing rent allowance (HRA), dearness allowance (DA), and other academic allowances that tenured faculty enjoy. Findings of various studies support this, suggesting that jobs with no progression or change over time lead to poor job satisfaction [28], [29]. The perception of injustice in salary structures further exacerbates dissatisfaction, as highlighted by Hagedorn [26] model, which linked salary discrepancies with reduced job satisfaction among female faculty. Faculty transfers emerged as a significant concern across all levels, with GF expressing the highest levels of anxiety. The frequent transfers within higher education institutions in Madhya Pradesh disrupt faculty stability and contribute to lower job satisfaction. This finding is consistent with a study that noted that frequent institutional changes negatively impact faculty satisfaction and their sense of belonging [30]. The interviews underscored the importance of salary equity in job satisfaction. GF, who lack the financial benefits enjoyed by tenured P, experience a heightened sense of perceived injustice. The absence of allowances and the fixed nature of their salaries contribute to their dissatisfaction. Hagedorn [31] research corroborates this, indicating that perceived salary inequities can significantly diminish job satisfaction.

Another critical issue identified was the poor quality of students, particularly in government colleges. Faculty members reported that low student engagement, poor attendance, and lenient attendance policies adversely affect their job satisfaction. The lack of motivation among students to participate actively in their education leads to frustration among faculty, who feel that their efforts in teaching are undervalued and underutilized, further diminishing their overall job satisfaction [32].

Our findings align closely with the conceptual framework of faculty job satisfaction [26], which emphasizes the interaction between triggers and mediators as critical determinants of job satisfaction. According to the theory, triggers such as changes in life stage, rank, or perceived justice significantly impact an individual's work-related responses. For instance, the lack of tenure and job security among GF serves as a powerful trigger that negatively affects their job satisfaction. This is compounded by mediators such as poor salary, inadequate working conditions, and limited opportunities for professional growth, which further exacerbate dissatisfaction. The model's recognition that no single factor or list of factors can universally predict job satisfaction underscores the complexity of the issues faced by non-tenured faculty, who experience multiple, overlapping challenges that diminish their job satisfaction.

The implications of these findings are significant for policy and decision-makers in higher education. The persistent issues of poor work environments, inadequate salaries, and limited career advancement opportunities for non-tenured faculty suggest a pressing need for structural reforms. Government and institutional policies should prioritize the creation of clear pathways for upgrading non-

tenure positions to tenure-track roles, which would enhance job security and provide opportunities for career progression. By addressing these systemic issues, it is possible to reduce the factors that contribute to low job satisfaction, ultimately leading to a more committed and satisfied faculty workforce.

A limitation of this study is that it did not assess the influence of gender, ethnicity, or the type of institution (e.g., girls', boys', or co-educational colleges) on job satisfaction. These factors could play a significant role in shaping faculty experiences and satisfaction levels. Future research should address these variables to provide a more comprehensive understanding of job satisfaction across diverse demographic and institutional contexts. Additionally, the number of lectures and the specific responsibilities of faculty members were not examined, which could further influence their job satisfaction and should be considered in subsequent studies.

4. CONCLUSION

This study highlights significant disparities in job satisfaction among faculty members across different hierarchical levels in higher education institutions in Madhya Pradesh, with non-tenured GF experiencing the lowest levels of satisfaction. The findings underscore the critical role of job security, fair compensation, and career advancement opportunities in fostering a positive work environment. Supported by the conceptual framework of job satisfaction, our results suggest that systemic triggers and mediators, such as inadequate salaries and poor working conditions, are key contributors to dissatisfaction. To address these issues, policy reforms that create clear pathways for non-tenure positions to transition into tenured roles are essential. Such reforms could enhance job satisfaction, leading to a more committed and productive faculty. Future research should further explore the impact of demographic variables and institutional types on job satisfaction to provide a more holistic understanding of the factors at play.

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Amit Kumar Soni	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			
Saroj Kothari	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

C : **C**onceptualization

M : **M**ethodology

So : **S**oftware

Va : **V**alidation

Fo : **F**ormal analysis

I : **I**nvestigation

R : **R**esources

D : **D**ata Curation

O : Writing - **O**riginal Draft

E : Writing - Review & **E**editing

Vi : **V**isualization

Su : **S**upervision

P : **P**roject administration

Fu : **F**unding acquisition

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors confirm that there are no conflict of interest related to financial matters or person connections that might influence the research findings presented in this paper.

INFORMED CONSENT

We have obtained informed consent from all individuals included in this study.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

The study adhered to all applicable national regulations and institutional policies in accordance with the Helsinki Declaration principles and received approval from the Universiti Malaysia Sarawak Ethics Committee.

DATA AVAILABILITY

The research data supporting this study's findings can be obtained from the corresponding author, [AKS] through reasonable request. The dataset is not publicly accessible due to privacy and ethical considerations, as it contains information that could potentially compromise participant confidentiality.

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